

## Message Text

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ACTION DHA-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 ORM-02 L-03  
SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /066 W  
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R 310845Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BERN  
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INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
AMEBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 2437

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SHUM, PA, SZ  
SUBJ: REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF PARAGUAYAN  
POLITICAL PRISONER MARTINO ROLON CENTURION

1. SUMMARY: EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE-LONGO MAI (ECLM)  
ORGANIZATION IN BASEL, SWITZERLAND HAS ASKED  
EMBASSY TO FORWARD TO USG REQUEST FOR HUMANITARIAN  
INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF MARTINO ROLON CENTURION,  
HELD IN ASUNCION MILITARY PRISON SINCE APRIL 1976.  
ECLM HAS ALSO SOUGHT INTERVENTION BY FRENCH, WEST  
GERMANS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
RED CROSS (ICRC), AND STATES THAT SWISS ARE WILLING  
TO ACCEPT CENTURION AS REFUGEE IF RELEASED FROM  
PRISON. ICRC HAS CONFIRMED TO EMBASSY ITS UNSUC-  
CESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO SEE CENTURION OR VERIFY HIS  
WHEREABOUTS AND CONDITION.

3. EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE-LONGO MAI (AGRICULTURAL  
COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT) WANTS USG TO INTERVENE ON  
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BEHALF OF MARTINO ROLON CENTURION, AGE 26, FATHER  
OF THREE, PRESIDENT OF CATHOLIC LIGAS AGRARIAS  
(PEASANTS ORGANIZATION) IN PARAGUAY. HE WAS  
ARRESTED BY PARAGUAYAN SECURITY FORCES APRIL 4,  
1976 DURING RAID ON LIGAS AGRARIAS AGRICULTURAL  
COOPERATIVE STATION. CENTURION REPORTEDLY WAS  
WOUNDED AND TAKEN TO MILITARY PRISON OF BATALLON

DE SEGURIDAD, TACUMBU, IN OR NEAR ASUNCION.

3. ACCORDING TO ECLM, CENTURIONS'S CONDITION IS REPORTED BY PRESS AND PARAGUAYAN SOURCES AS VERY BAD AND HE MIGHT DIE UNLESS RELEASED FROM PRISON. CENTURION WAS REPORTED TO BE ALIVE AS OF MARCH 1977, THOUGH OFFICIALS CLAIM HE DIED IN 1976. ECLM SAID THAT UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF CENTURION'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS HAVE BEEN MADE BY FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, ICRC, WEST GERMAN ARMY BISHOP DR HENGSBACH, AND WEST GERMAN CDU PRESIDENT DR HELMUT KOHL. ECLM ALSO CLAIMS THAT SWISS JUSTICE AND POLICE DEPT IS WILLING TO PERMIT CENTURION ENTER SWITZERLAND AS REFUGEE IF HE IS RELEASED.

4. EMBOFF DISCUSSED ECLM REQUEST WITH DR NESSI OF ICRC GENEVA WHO SAID THAT ICRC REGIONAL OFFICE IN BUENOS AIRES HAD UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO VISIT CENTURION IN ASUNCION. DURING LATEST INQUIRY, PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES TOLD ICRC THAT CENTURION WAS NOT AT MILITARY PRISON IN TACUMBU. NESSI SAID THERE ARE CONFLICTING RUMORS CONCERNING CENTURION, SOME SAY HE DIED YEAR AGO AFTER BEING TORTURED AND OTHERS INDICATE HE IS ALIVE BUT IN POOR CONDITION. NESSI ADDED THAT ICRC HAS RECORD OF POOR RESULTS IN MAKING DEMARCHES WITH PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES AND NOTED CENTURION CASE WAS ONE OF MANY ICRC IS HANDLING IN PARAGUAY OF PERSONS WHO CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE DISAPPEARED, OFTEN AFTER ARREST. NESSI SAID CENTURION'S POSITION AS LIGAS AGRARIAS LEADER COULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT REASON WHY AUTHORITIES WANTED HIM ARRESTED.

5. NESSI SAID THAT ICRC WOULD LIKE TO LEARN WHETHER CENTURION IS DEAD, IN WHICH CASE HIS BODY SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO HIS FAMILY. IF HE IS ALIVE, HIS FAMILY SHOULD BE INFORMED AND PERMITTED TO VISIT. NESSI BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT INFO COULD BE OBTAINED ONLY THROUGH APPROACH TO PARAGUAY FOREIGN MINISTER, MINISTER OF INTERIOR OR PRESIDENT.

6. ICLM REP WHO CONTACTED EMBASSY IS AMERICAN CITIZEN, NICHOLAS BUSCH. BUSCH SAID ECLM IS AGRIC COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT WITH PROGRAM OF SETTING UP KIBBUTZ-TYPE COOPERATIVES IN FRANCE, SWITZERLAND AND WEST GERMANY. FIRST SETTLEMENT WAS

IN SOUTHERN FRANCE, CALLED LONGO MAI, WHICH NAME  
ECLM HAS RETAINED.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PROVIDE BASIS FOR  
REPLY TO ECLM ON POSSIBILITY OF US INTERVENTION  
TO LEARN CENTURIONS CONDITION OR TO HELP EFFECT  
HIS RELEASE. BUSCH SAID ECLM IS NOT OPTIMISTIC  
ABOUT CENTURION'S CONDITION OR OBTAINING HIS  
RELEASE BUT FEELS THAT ALL EFFORTS SHOULD BE  
MADE SO LONG AS THERE IS HOPE HE COULD BE ALIVE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Subject:** REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF PARAGUAYAN POLITICAL PRISONER MARTINO ROLON CENTURION  
**TAGS:** SHUM, PA, SZ, US, (CENTURION, MARTINO ROLON)  
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**Review Markings:**  
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22 May 2009  
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